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COLLEGE OF THE DESERT AND FIRST SOLAR COLLABORATE ON REGION'S FIRST UTILITY-SCALE SOLAR TRAINING FOR LOCAL GREEN WORKFORCE

*Training Class and Celebration Event to Take Place at COD's
Desert Energy Enterprise Center, Wednesday, April 28*

Palm Desert, CA (April 23, 2010) - College of the Desert (COD) announced today that it is collaborating with First Solar, a leading manufacturer of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and provider of solar solutions, to support local training for green jobs in the utility-scale solar projects coming to Riverside County.

First Solar is donating solar equipment, hands-on training and curriculum development for COD's Desert Region Renewable Energy Training Program held at the Desert Energy Enterprise Center (DEEC). The DEEC opened in January 2010 and since then has trained workers for utility-scale solar energy plant construction in anticipation of several proposed solar projects in the Southern California desert. The COD program is reaching out to new workforce entrants, the unemployed and underemployed workers.

"As the region's utility-scale solar energy industry grows, generation companies and their contractors, as well as unions, will be searching for skilled workers who understand solar installation and maintenance requirements," said Larry McLaughlin, director, advanced transportation technology and energy center at COD. "We are extremely grateful to First Solar for donating their industry-leading solar equipment and expertise to help train our local workforce so they are better qualified for the many solar projects proposed for our area."

"First Solar's collaboration with COD is a great example of our commitment to working with education and the local community to support green jobs and provide a much needed boost to the local economy," said Kim Oster, director of business development for First Solar. "Once approved, Desert Sunlight, a 550MW solar project near Desert Center being developed by



First Solar, is expected to create approximately 430 construction jobs, fifteen ongoing maintenance and operations jobs, indirect benefits to local businesses and sales tax revenue to the county of approximately \$10 million over a two to three year constuction period.”

Representatives from COD/DEEC and First Solar will gather with students and local dignitaries to celebrate the donation and first utility-scale training class on **Wednesday, April 28 from 3-4 p.m. at College of the Desert’s Desert Energy Enterprise Center, 3301 Micro Place in Palm Springs (at I-10 and Gene Autry Trail).**

Speakers at the event will include **Riverside County Supervisor John Benoit, Lee Haven, vice chair, Riverside County workforce investment board executive committee**, as well as representatives from COD and First Solar. After a brief presentation, **COD students enrolled in the program** and participating in the day’s training will be available for interviews.

About First Solar:

First Solar manufactures solar modules with an advanced semiconductor technology and provides comprehensive photovoltaic (PV) system solutions. The company is delivering an economically viable alternative to fossil-fuel generation today. From raw material sourcing through end-of-life collection and recycling, First Solar is focused on creating cost-effective, renewable energy solutions that protect and enhance the environment. For more information about First Solar, please visit <http://www.firstsolar.com>

About College of the Desert/Desert Energy Enterprise Center:

College of the Desert is a two-year degree granting institution of the State of California Community College System offering a variety of academic, career, and technical education programs designed to prepare productive citizens and a skilled workforce. In January, College of the Desert established the Desert Energy Enterprise Center for co-locating training programs, demonstration projects, and partnership activities dedicated to growing the renewable energy industry in our region.